

Colonel Robert R. McCormick

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Robert Rutherford McCormick, also known as Colonel McCormick, was a well known publisher, editor, and soldier. He worked for the *Chicago Tribune* for most of his life.

At one point, he was owner of the *Chicago Tribune*. McCormick was the owner for several decades. He was said to be one of the most powerful and controversial figures in journalism. McCormick was also sometimes referred to as the “greatest mind of the fourteenth century.”

McCormick was born at 150 East Ontario Street in Chicago on July 30, 1880. He was the fifth Robert McCormick in his family’s American history. He and his brother went to grade school in England while his father was a minister in London. While in England, McCormick learned how the countries of Europe worked, and how they fought wars just to enlarge their countries’ territory. One summer McCormick earned a profitable amount of money installing doorbells to houses in his neighborhood. McCormick went to high school at Groton School in Groton, Maryland. When he was eighteen he left school to go live with his ill grandfather in San Antonio, Texas.

In the fall of 1899, he entered Yale just as his brother had. He choose a variety of subjects to study including physics, accounting, economics, and mechanics. While out of school for the one summer, he traveled all over the world. He then graduated from Yale in 1903, and went to the Northwestern college of law. He graduated from there in 1906, and was admitted to the bar in 1908.

McCormick was also involved in the City of Chicago and his country. He served on the Chicago City Council for two years. McCormick also became a colonel in World War I. While in the war he said “the United States should stay out of so many conflicts.” He was awarded the United States distinguished service medal.

McCormick was named president of the Tribune company in 1911. He and his cousin, Joseph Medill Patterson, shared the functions of publisher and editor of the *Tribune* from 1914-1925. Then, in 1925, he became the sole editor and publisher because Patterson became preoccupied with the *Daily News*. When McCormick became president of the *Tribune*, he proposed a plan for the *Tribune* to build their own paper mill to keep the price of newspapers low. It took two years to build this newspaper mill. The newspaper kept growing to become the world’s richest newspaper. McCormick used his paper to urge Americans to not enter World War II. The *Tribune* was also called the “World’s greatest newspaper” for as long as McCormick was working there.

McCormick’s family was a big part of his life. His father, Robert Sanderson McCormick, was a U. S. diplomat, and was the first American ambassador to Austria-Hungary. His mother, Katherine Medill, was the daughter of Joseph Medill editor and proprietor of the *Chicago Tribune*. Joseph Medill was also a founder of the Republican Party. McCormick also had one brother, Joseph Medill, and one sister, Katrina, who died before he was born. In 1915 he married Amie Irwin Adams, who died in 1939. He then married Maryland Matheson Hooper in 1944. He had no children with either of his two wives.

McCormick died on April 1, 1955, at his estate in Wheaton, Illinois. He helped to establish one of the most lasting influences, the Medill School of Journalism at

Northwestern University. McCormick spent a great deal of his time working on the *Chicago Tribune*, but he did manage to find time to write some books. He was the author of these two books, *The American Revolution and its Influence on World Civilization* in 1945, and *The War without Grant* in 1950. McCormick is still a well known publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, and will never be forgotten for the good deeds he did in his life.

[From Burton Cooke, "Colonel Robert Rutherford McCormick." 1997. Northern Illinois University. <www.bookrags.com?biography/robert-rutherford-mccormick> (Oct. 12, 2007); Joseph Gies, *The Colonel of Chicago*; Soylent Communications. "Robert McCormick." 2007. NNDB Tracking the Entire World <www.nndb.com/people/153/000159673> (Oct. 12, 2007); Richard Norton Smith, *The Colonel*; and Thomson Corporation, "Robert Rutherford McCormick Biography." 2005. Book Rags <www.lib.niu.edu/ipo/1997/ihy970450.html> (Oct. 12, 2007).]